

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15 INR-07

/055 W

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R 301134Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6084

USDOC WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 540

ATHENS FOR RTDO; CAIRO FOR COMAT AND DUSEX HAMMOND

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, SY

SUBJ: DAMASCUS INTERNATIONAL FAIR (CPF), JULY 25-AUG. 20, 1976

REF: A. STATE 20370, B. STATE 15372, C. 75 DAMASCUS 4962,
D. TYRRELL/MCCOWEN TELCON WITH WRIGHT 1/26/76

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY BEGINNING IMMEDIATELY RECRUITMENT EFFORT IN SUPPORT OUR CPF PARTICIPATION IN SUBJECT FAIR. TIGHT BUDGET AND PROBLEMS TO BE OVERCOME TO MOUNT SUCCESSFUL FAIR DISCUSSED BELOW, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM USDOC. SINCE ONLY AREA SO FAR AVAILABLE IS SAME AS LAST YEAR'S BARN/HANGER STRUCTURE, WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND CONSIDERATION OF INFLATABLE OR GEODESIC DOME WHICH CAN BE SOLD AFTER FAIR. USDOC REQUESTED SUPPLY US SOONEST WITH FURTHER DOME INFO. END SUMMARY.

2. THIS MESSAGE IS OUR INITIAL RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS POSED IN REFS A AND D; IT ALSO FURTHER REFINES OUR PLAN OF ACTION OUTLINED IN REF C.

3. EMBASSY APPRECIATES SELECTION BY STATE/USDOC TO PARTICIPATE IN DAMASCUS FAIR (PLEASE CORRECT EDITION AND DATES IN UNCLASSIFIED

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REF A. AS FOLLOWS: TWENTY-THIRD DAMASCUS INTERNATIONAL FAIR,

JULY 25 TO AUGUST 20, 1976). AS WE NOTED IN REF C, WE HAD HOPED TO LEARN OF TENTATIVE PARTICIPATION DECISION BY END OF DECEMBER 75 IN ORDER TO BE IN A GO, NO-GO DECISION-MAKING POSITION BY MID FEBRUARY AFTER KNOWING INITIAL RESULTS OF RECRUITMENT EFFORTS. WE ARE BEGINNING ALL-OUT EFFORT FOR RECRUITMENT AS WE DID LAST YEAR WITH VALUABLE STATE/USDOC BACKSTOPPING. WISH TO STRESS, HOWEVER, THAT SINCE REF A HAS ALREADY PUT US IN "GO" POSITION, ONLY OTHER AREA OF "GIVE" IN CASE RECRUITMENT EFFORT GOES BELOW \$50,000 IN INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTIONS (COMPARED TO \$68,250 LAST YEAR) WILL BE IN-EXTREMIS USDOC SUPPORT. MOREOVER, WHILE WE WILL DO OUR VERY BEST TO STAY WITHIN OVERALL BUDGET OF \$85,000, MUST POINT OUT 1975 EFFORT COST \$136,059, EXCLUSIVE OF DUXES TRAVEL AND TDY (\$5,000 ORIGINALLY WITHHELD BY USDOC FOR THIS COST).

4. CPF MODIFICATION. AS AGREED UPON IN REF D TELCON, ALREADY SELECTED DUSEX FOR DAMASCUS, MCCOWEN, WILL ACT AS OUR BACKSTOP IN RECRUITMENT EFFORT, WHICH WILL BE EXCELLENT PREPARATION FOR HIS WORK HERE. ALL WE ARE REQUESTING IN OUR SO-CALLED MODIFICATION IS USUAL, EXCELLENT USDOC BACKSTOPPING AND FOLLOW-UP OF EMBASSY-MOUNTED RECRUITMENT EFFORT, WHICH WE AGREE IS OUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY.

5. RECRUITMENT: OUR RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN VIA AMBASSADOR'S CABLES TO TOP OFFICIALS OF AMERICAN FIRMS AND LOCAL EFFORTS VIS-A-VIS SYRIAN AGENTS IS NOW BEGINNING. (LOCAL AGENTS REQUESTING PARTICIPATION FORM; USDOC PLEASE CONFIRM TO US WE CAN USE USDOC FORMS LEFT OVER FROM 1975, OR CONFIRM AIRPOUCH OF NEW FORMS.) SHOTGUN CABLE APPROACH TO FIRMS MEETING MARKET NEEDS IN SYRIA WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY SPECIFIC CABLED APPROACHES TO FIRMS THAT HAVE ALREADY VISITED SYRIA. THIS EFFORT WILL REQUIRE ASSISTANCE OF OTHER POSTS IN AREA TO DELIVER OUR MESSAGE, E.G., TEHRAN, BAGHDAD, KUWAIT, AMMAN, CAIRO AND ATHENS, GIVEN RELOCATION OF MANY REGIONAL COMPANY HEADQUARTERS FROM BEIRUT. WILL CONTINUE TO POUCH TO BEIRUT ALL APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC WITH HOPE OF REACHING SOME FIRMS STILL REMAINING THERE.

6. SPACE AVAILABLE. IN JAN 28 DISCUSSION WITH FAIR AUTHORITY DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND HIS STAFF, BEST AVAILABLE SPACE AT THIS POINT IS SAME PAVILION OF FAIR AUTHORITY WE USED IN 1975.
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FLOOR SITE, ELEVATION, ETC PLANS AND USDOC BOOTH LAYOUT PLAN OF APRIL 1975 SHOULD STILL BE AVAILABLE IN USDOC, PLUS KIRCHSCHLAGER'S PHOTOGRAPHS. PLEASE CONFIRM. (WE HAVE ASKED FOR BUILDING FLOOR PLAN AND WILL AIRPOUCH WHAT IS AVAILABLE.)

7. BASCI CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED IN THIS BARN/HANGER STRUCTURE ARE:

A. SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS: 33 METERS (M) BY 33 M.,
WITH SIX M CLEARANCE FLOOR TO BOTTOM OF ROOF BEAM; ROOF SUP-
PORTED ON 70 CM SQUARE COLUMNS, THREE METERS ON CENTERS IN
NORTH/SOUTH DIRECTION, 11 M ON CENTERS IN EAST/WEST DIRECTION-
TWO INNER ROWS OF NORTH/SOUTH SUPPORT COLUMNS ARE DOUBLE, THUS
MAKING 70 BY 185 CM COLUMNS. TOTAL AREA ENCLOSED BY PAVILION
WALLS IS AS LAST YEAR, 1,089 SQ. M. (SEE PAGE 40 DUSEX
'75 REPORT.)

B. PRESENT CONDIIION: EXTERIOR PAINT HAS HELD UP WELL,
WOULD NEED ONE MORE COAT TO REPRODUCE WHITE AND RED/WHITE/BLUE
STRIPED DECORATION AS IN '75. METAL ROLLDOWN ENTRANCE AND EXIT
DOORS ON EAST AND SOUTH WALLS IN GOOD SHAPE, AS IS WOODEN DOOR
ON WEST SIDE. TWO CRUDE BATHROOMS STILL INTACT. PAVILION
CURRENTLY USED AS STORAGE FOR SARG PETROLEUM PRODUCT DIS-
TRIBUTION COMPANY (SADCOP) AND CONTAINS STACKED BOXES (24 KGS
EACH) CONTAINING LUBE OIL CANS COVERING ALMOST ENTIRE FLOOR
AREA, ABOUT FIVE METERS HIGH, NOT ON PALLETS. SADCOP RE
ESTIMATED TO E/C OFFICERS AND FAIR OFFICIAL, SAMI DIB, WOULD
TAKE SIX WEEKS TO EMPTY BUILDING. COMMENT: FLOOR IN ROUGHT
SHAPE; DIB SAID FAIR WOULD CLEAN, RE-LAY SMOOTH CEMENT COVER
AND CARPETING IN AISLE AREAS AS WAS DONE IN 1975.

C. RENTAL: SAME AS 1975 OR LS 35/SQ M (\$9.59/SQ M) FOR
TOTAL OF \$10,444 FOR INSIDE PAVILION. OUTSIDE PRICE SAME AS
1975 OR LS 15/SQ M. (\$4.11/SQ. M) OR \$4,110 FOR 1,000 SQ M ESTI-
MATED FOR OUTSIDE AREA WHICH FAIR AUTHORITY CAN MAKE AVAIL-
ABLE IN SAME CONFIGURATION AS IN 75 (MAINLY ON WEST SIDE).
ONLY CHANGE IN FAIR REGULATIONS AND COSTS (FROM 75 INSTRUCTIONS
"APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION"; FORM WHICH USDOC SHOULD HAVE
WE POUCHING COPIES OF 1976 MATERIAL) IS CONNECTION OF
ONE MAIN TELEPHONE LINE AT LS 500 (\$137) COMPARED TO LS 250
IN 1975.

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15 INR-07

/055 W

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6085

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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 DAMASCUS 540

8. PROBLEMS WITH EXISTING PAVILION (AND NO BETTER ONES NOW AVAILABLE E.G., YUGOSLAV; SOVIETS ARE BUILDING 2,500 SQ M, 40 M FRONT, NEW PERMANENT PAVILION RIGHT BEHIND OUR 75 PAVILION, SOUTH BEYOND FOUNTAIN):

A. LOST SPACE: WE PAY FOR 1,089 SQ M BUT, WITH JUTTING SIDE SUPPORT COLUMNS, WE LOSE ABOUT 264 SQ M OR 24 PER CENT OF INSIDE SPACE (WORTH \$2,532). PARTIAL SOLUTION IS SINGLE, STRONGER SUPPORT COLUMNS, AS OPPOSED TO PRESENT SCAFFOLDING/ERECTOR SET MAZE OF PIPES, STRONGER ARCH SUPPORTS, ALLOWING FOR TEN M CENTERS ON ROOF SUPPORT COLUMNS IN PLACE OF PRESENT THREE M CENTERS, THUS ALLOWING MORE OPEN EXHIBIT SPACE. WE ARE REQUESTING COST ESTIMATE AS FAIR AUTHORITY WILL NOT PAY FOR SUCH ALTERATION.

B. IT IS A BARN, ALLOWING ONLY FOR SERPENTINE, PRISON-LIKE MOVEMENT AND UNATTRACTIVE CUBICLE DISPLAY (AS 75 DUSEX REPORT NOTED: WE PUT A CADILLAC IN A BARN).

C. VENTILATION IS VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEM (PAGE 40 DUSEX REPORT); ENLARGING 45 SQ M VENTILATION AREA MAY BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT ENDANGERING STRUCTURAL STRENGTH, BUT THIS OR REMOVAL OF OR OPENING OF CLOSTRA TYPE TILES ONLY ALLOWS MORE HEAVY WIND AND DUST IN. STRONG EXHAUST FANS AND RAISING METAL UNCLASSIFIED

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FLANGE COVER ON THE TWO ROOF PEAKS TO ALLOW MORE HOT AIR TO ESCAPE (DIB'S IDEA) MIGHT HELP.

9. EXHIBIT CONSTRUCTION/ERECTION/DISMANTLING:

A. COSTS AND MATERIALS: BASED ON 74 BOOTH DESIGN AND FOCO'S 75 DESIGN, UTILIZATION OF LOCAL MATERIALS AND LABOR INSOFAR AS POSSIBLE, FIRST ROUGH GUESS OF COST BY FIRST CONTRACTOR WE REACHED (YACIOUBIAN) IS \$40,000 FOR THIRTY 3 X 4 M

BOOTH. FOR WORK YACoubIAN DID IN 75, OUTSIDE OF FOCO CONTRACT, HE AGAIN ESTIMATED \$30,000. HAVING WORKED WITH BEIRUT'S MERO SYSTEM IN 74, YACoubIAN SAYS HE COULD REDUCE \$40,000 ESTIMATE CONSIDERABLY IF MERO SYSTEM AVAILABLE. (IN TELECON WITH BEIRUT, WE LEARNED MERO SYSTEM STILL THERE, CAN BE CONFIGURED TO 3X4, 4X5, AND 2X3 BOOTHS, HAS VARIOUS TABLES, LETTERS, LIGHTS, ETC; SYSTEM HAS MADE UP 17-EXHIBITOR SHOW, PLUS ONE OFFICE AND ONE LARGE (10X5) LOUNGE. WE DEFINITELY BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONSIDER USE OF MERO SYSTEM AS CHANCES ARE WE COULD GET IT TO DAMASCUS IN NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS. BEIRUT HAS BEEN REQUESTED TO SEND US MERO INVENTORY.) WE ARE IN TOUCH WITH TWO OTHER EXPERIENCED LOCAL CONTRACTORS EXHIBIT BUILDERS, REQUESTING THEIR ESTIMATES AND WILL CABLE TO USDOC.

B. PROPOSED LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION: 25 TO 30 FIRMS IS ABOUT RIGHT, BUT NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO TELL UNTIL END FEBRUARY UPON INITIAL RESULTS OF RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN. GIVEN PAVILION BEING OFFERED, LESS THAN THIS NUMBER OF COMPANIES WOULD BE DIFFICULT.

10. SOLUTION TO PAVILION PROBLEMS AND EXHIBIT CONSTRUCTION COST IS A DOME -- GEODESIC OR INFLATED.

A. SPACE IS AVAILABLE AT GOOD LOCATIONS ON FAIRGROUNDS AND AT \$4.11/SQ M COST WOULD MEAN \$4,110 INSIDE RENTAL FOR 1,000 SQ M, SAVING \$6,334 WHICH CAN BE SPENT ON FOUNDATION, ERECTION AND ADDITION OF COOLING UNIT TO SUPPLIER'S AIR PUMP FOR INFLATABLE DOME. THUS, PROBLEMS OF WIND, DUST, VENTILATION, HEAT AND LACK OF OPEN SPACE ARE SOLVED. ALSO, LOST SPACE (PARA. 8) IS REGAINED.

B. FAIR AUTHORITY WANTS TO BUY INFLATABLE DOME, YACoubIAN
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WANTS TO BUY EITHER INFLATABLE OR GEODESIC, AS DO SEVERAL OTHER CONTRACTORS HERE ESPECIALLY IN ADVANCE OF PANARAB GAMES TO OPEN IN DAMASCUS IN OCTOBER. MAJOR, IF NOT ALL PORTION OF DOME'S COST WILL NOT BE IN OUR BUDGET.

C. DOME ALLOWS FREE MOVEMENT OF PAVILION VISITORS, BETTER DESIGN AND PLACEMENT OF EXHIBITS, USE OF FLEXIBLE MERO OR OTHER LESS EXPENSIVE OR LOCALLY MADE SYSTEM, AND DEMONSTRATES FOR FIRST TIME THIS AMERICAN CONSTRUCTION CAPABILITY IN SYRIA (AS NOW BEING DONE IN RIYADH UNIVERSITY FOR UNIVERSITY SPORTS PALACE, ACCORDING TO MARYLAND IOGA MEMBER A. JAMES CLARK, GEO. HYMAN CONSTRUCTION CO. 4930 DEL RAY AVE. BETHESDA, MARYLAND.

D. ACTION REQUESTED: USDOC PROVIDE US SOONEST WITH COST ESTIMATES, MANUFACTURE/SHIPPING TIME AND COST, ERECTION

TIME AND COST, ENTRANCE DOOR CLEARANCES, ETC. FOR BOTH INFLATABLE AND GEODESIC DOMES FOR APPROPRIATE FIRMS SUCH AS IRVAN INDUSTRIES, INC., HYMAN CONSTRUCTION AND OTHERS FOR VARIOUS SIZES (1,000, 1,200 UP TO 1,500 SQ M).

11. SHIPPING: TARTOUS IS MAINLY AN EXPORT PORT WHILE LATAKIA IS EXPORT/IMPORT (MORE VOLUME FOR NORTHERN SYRIAN THAN TARTOUS HANDLES FOR SOUTHERN SYRIA) AND LATAKIA ALSO IS MAIN TRANSIT PORT. BOTH ARE HIGHLY CONGESTED NOW, AT LEAST TOAL OF 110 SHIPS WAITING NOW (SOMEWHAT SEASONAL, SHOULD BE BETTER IN EARLY SUMMER), CONFERENCE LINES NOW HAVE PUT 75 PER CENT SURCHARGE ON BOTH PORTS. MORE OVERLAND TRAFFICE FROM EUROPE IS NOW USED OWING TO PORT CONGESTION; NEW 500 PER CENT HIGHER TURKISH TRANSIT CHARGES WILL MAKE OVERLAND SHIPMENTS MORE EXPENSIVE, BUT MANY DAMASCUS SOURCES BELIEVE OVERLAND MORE RELIABLE TIME - AND SAFETY-WISE: MANY EXHIBITORS IN OTHER PAVILIONS IN 75 USED OVERLAND FROM EUROPE EXCUSIVELY. FAIR AUTHORITY WAS NOT CONVINCING TO US IN PROMISING THAT IT WULD OR COULD PUSH FOR PRIORITY TREATMENT FROM MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT (CONTROLS PORTS) FOR FAIR-DESTINED CARGO. IN SUM, WE TEND TO OPT FIRST FOR OVERLAND THEN RO-RO FROM ITALY AND FINALLY BY SEA TO TARTOUS IF SHIPMENTS MADE SUFFICIENTLY EARLY.

12. PRACTICES AT FAIR (PARA 7, REF B). SINCE WE HAVE NOT RPT NOT INFORMED SARG AND FAIR AUTHORITY WE ARE COMMITTED TO UNCLASSIFIED

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PARTICIPATE ("WE ARE CONSIDERING"), WE WILL INDEED PUSH FOR CHANGES IN PRACTICES AT FAIR SO CLEARLY IDENTIFIED BY DUSEX'S 75 REPORT AND WILL PROMPTLY REPORT PROGRESS WHICH USDOC CAN PASS ON TO EXHIBITORS.

13. HAVE FORTUNATELY JUST RECEIVED JIDDA 649 RE BUILDDEX '76 AND USE OF DOMES. SEPTTEL WILL COMMENT FURTHER. MURPHY

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